

State Ethics Panel Threatens to Release Vito Lopez Report

Posted on Apr 30, Posted by [David Howard King](#) Category [State](#)

The Joint Commission on Public Ethics released a statement threatening to make the findings of their investigation into disgraced Brooklyn powerbroker and Assemblyman Vito Lopez public.

JCOPE has been looking into the scandal involving sexual harassment allegations against Lopez that led Speaker Sheldon Silver to pay out a settlement to Lopez's accusers and eventually strip Lopez of his legislative perks. JCOPE finished its investigation and forwarded it to the Legislative Ethics Commission according to the law so that they can measure punishment for Lopez and possibly Silver.

But Staten Island District Attorney Dan Donovan requested earlier this year that the Legislative Ethics Commission refrain from releasing the report as he continues a criminal investigation into Lopez. But JCOPE isn't interested in waiting. JCOPE has been accused of being a toothless watchdog in the past weeks as legislative corruption scandals have bloomed.

The ethics panel says it will go ahead and release its findings if the Legislative Ethics Commission doesn't.

Here is JCOPE's statement:

In February, the Joint Commission on Public Ethics issued a Substantial Basis Investigation Report to the Legislative Ethics Commission for its review under Legislative Law §80. Pursuant to statutory mandate, if the Legislative Ethics Commission should fail to do so, the Joint Commission shall release the report in its entirety after the ongoing 90-day period provided for under law.

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